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ABSTRACT

This interim report on an experimental program to increase student motivation to learn French at the Cultural Centre of Intensive French (CCIF) examines objectives, evaluation procedures, and results of the experiment. Part 1 contains sections on: (1) French achievement in Ottawa, Canada, grade 8 classes, (2) Pimsleur listening comprehension test, (3) Pimsleur speaking test, (4) CCIF pre-test and post-test, and (5) a student questionnaire. Part 2 includes: (1) the effect of the CCIF experience, (2) comparison between CCIF students and others, (3) a concluding statement, and (4) changes in CCIF students. (RL)

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# EVALUATION OF AN EXPERIMENTAL INTENSIVE FRENCH PROGRAMME FOR GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS

FOR FL

by

Frances Crook Morrison

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ottawa Board of Education established, in the fall of 1970, a new school called The Cultural Centre of Intensive French (CCIF) in order to increase students' motivation to learn French as well as to improve their fluency in the language. Students, mainly in grades 8 and 9, spent two weeks at the Centre, with each full school day consisting of classes, sports, and other activities, with French as the medium of communication. As a consequence of the enthusiastic response among grade 8 students during the first year of the programme (1970-71), it was decided to increase the number of sessions offered at the grade 8 level during 1971-72. Sessions were also made available for grade 12 students and for those grade 8 students who had recently transferred to Ottawa schools without previous instruction in French.

During the first year of the programme, various types of evaluation activities were carried out by the CCIF staff and by staff of the Ottawa Board of Education Research Centre. Data collected during the first year were described in a preliminary report*, and showed that, among grade 8 students in particular, there was a strong feeling that the experience had been beneficial. However, there were no data at that time which indicated which students might benefit most and only limited information concerning the nature of the changes which occurred as a result of attendance at CCIF.

The preliminary investigation in 1970-71 led to the development of a plan for a carefully controlled study of the grade 8 students attending CCIF in 1971-72. [illegible]ugh the data collection is not complete at this time ( May, [illegible]), information is now available concerning the status of the general grade 8 population with respect to the learning of French; this

* F. Morrison. A Pilot Study of the Cultural Centre of Intensive French. Ottawa Board of Education, Research Report 71-04, October 1971.

material will be presented in Part I of this interim report. Only a limited amount of data comparing the achievement of students before and after attending CCIF could be obtained at mid-year; these results will be presented in Part II of the report.

Experimental design

In order to learn more about the effect of the experience, it was decided to examine the differential effect on pupils of low and high general ability and on pupils whose initial French achievement was relatively low or high. For each session, therefore, four experimental groups were selected from among the applicants:

(a) Low general ability, High French achievement ($LF^+$)

(b) High general ability, Low French achievement ($HF^-$)

(c) Low general ability, Low French achievement ($LF^-$)

(d) High general ability, High French achievement ($HF^+$)

Teachers were assigned to CCIF classes in a way which balanced the effect of specific teachers. Students were randomly chosen for CCIF from among the applicants as far as possible while maintaining the four-way classification scheme with respect to general ability and French achievement. A reserve list was provided to ensure that the size of groups was maintained in case withdrawals occurred during the first two days of a ten-day CCIF session. The applicants not chosen were to provide a control group; a second group, consisting of those not applying, was also available for use in making comparisons. Students known to be bilingual and those who had exceptionally high PLC scores were not included in the regular sessions or in the comparison groups. A special session was arranged in mid-year for advanced students who had not been included in the earlier sessions.

Collection of data

The instruments used during the first half of the 1971-72 school year in the evaluation of the grade 8 CCIF programme are as follows:

(1) A measure of French listening comprehension:
The Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test

(2) Measures of speaking proficiency:
(a) the Pimsleur Speaking Test - Vocabulary and Fluency
(b) CCIF pre- and post-tests - Tests d'Expression

(3) A questionnaire designed to elicit information about background as well as student evaluation of the CCIF experience.

(4) An interview schedule for use after students had attended CCIF.

The progress report will discuss results obtained from the preliminary testing of all grade 8 students in the schools of the Ottawa Board of Education on the Pimsleur listening comprehension test, and from speaking tests given to students in several schools. In order to get some indication at mid-year concerning the effect of CCIF on French listening comprehension, the same test given in September was administered a second time to all students in the two schools represented at the first regular grade 8 session in October. The results of speaking tests given to CCIF students at the beginning and end of each session will also be analyzed. Responses to a questionnaire administered immediately after the CCIF session to all students in the schools represented will be described. Students selected from those who attended the November session were interviewed to get their impression of the effect of the two-week intensive course in French.

The entire investigation should be of great value to those engaged in planning improvements in the French instructional programme designed for all pupils. Since little systematic testing in French has been done to date, careful examination of the results of the present study should identify strengths and weaknesses of past programmes and suggest changes to be made for the future. In this context, it is important that this study be seen as part of a continuing evaluation programme in second language learning.

The various sections of this report will discuss results obtained from administration of the five instruments used in this study. Part I will deal with data related to the general grade 8 population, while Part II will discuss the limited data available at mid-year concerning changes which occur as the result of the CCIF experience. At the end of the year it will be possible to examine both the relationships among the measures used and also the differences attributable to general academic ability or to initial French achievement.

PART I

## FRENCH ACHIEVEMENT IN OTTAWA GRADE 8 CLASSES

### PIMSLEUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST

In the spring of 1971 the two levels of each of two commercially available French listening comprehension tests were administered at various grade levels in Ottawa schools in order to find out which tests would be most suitable for use the following year. For grade 8 students in Ottawa, the Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test-Form A appeared to be the most suitable.

The Pimsleur French Test is one of a series, involving four different languages and two levels of difficulty, which attempts to include a representative sample of material commensurate with the aims of language courses enphasizing communications skills. The test has four sections, including listening comprehension and speaking tests. The author, Paul Pimsleur, is a professor with a joint appointment in the education and modern language departments of the State University of New York at Albany.

In Form A of the Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test there are two parts. The first requires the students to select from among four printed sentences the one which he has heard. The second part asks him to select from four possible alternatives an appropriate reply to each of the questions or statements presented on the tape. This test was administered in September and October of 1971 to all Grade 8 students in the 18 intermediate schools under the Ottawa Board of Education. During the previous April and May the same test had been given to all students then in Grade 8 at three of these schools.

In order to get some perspective on the achievement of Ottawa students, one can examine the results obtained in other groups. The Pimsleur Level A tests were standardized in the United States using students who had completed a "first-level" course with an audio-lingual approach, such as ALM Level 1 (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich). Such students would probably have taken two years of language instruction in the junior or senior high school; the course would not have been compulsory, so that only the more academically able students would have taken it. About 4500 students in grades 8 through 12 who took the Level A test had a mean score of 21.1.

Another group for which data could be obtained consists of 233 grade 7 students at a regional high school in Western Quebec, who were tested in December, 1971. At this regional high school the programme in French at the grade 7 level consists of 40 minutes of French daily. Although an oral approach is emphasized, written work and grammar are included. In the feeder schools, students have had 30 to 60 minutes of French daily, typically starting in grade 2 or 3, and in any case not later than grade 4*. The 233 students tested included all those in grade 7 except for one occupational class which does not follow the regular French programme. Before the recent organization of regional schools in the province of Quebec, grade 7 represented the last year of elementary school and might be considered approximately equivalent to grade 8 in the Ontario system. The current organization in Quebec consists of six years elementary school and five years of secondary school, after which students are usually admitted to grade 13 or to the qualifying year in Ontario universities.

* Further details about the programme can be obtained from J.C. Martin, "Teaching of French in parts of Western Quebec," in What's What for Children Learning French. Ottawa, Citizen's Committee on Children, 1972.

Table 1 summarizes results for the two comparison groups and for Ottawa grade 8 students. Data given for the three schools mentioned earlier represent scores of different pupils, and not changes in scores of the same pupils. It should be noted that the US group represents an older and more highly selected one than the Ottawa grade 8 students. The grade 7 students in Hull are slightly younger than the Ottawa group but have had three or four times as much class time spent on French during their elementary school years, though their teachers are frequently not native French speakers.

Table 1

PIMSLEUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST
Comparison of four groups

| | Mean | S. D. | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Three Ottawa schools | | | |
| Grade 8, end-of-year, 1970-71 | 17.9 | 5.7 | 542 |
| Grade 8, beginning of year, 1971-72 | 17.3 | 5.3 | 500 |
| All Ottawa schools | | | |
| Grade 8, beginning of year, 1971-72 | 17.0 | 5.3 | 2675 |
| Hull Grade 7 (Mid-year) | 21.9 | 6.5 | 233 |
| US 1st level course, Grades 8-12 (Spring) | 21.1 | 5.6 | 4500 (approx.) |

## PIMSLEUR SPEAKING TEST

The Pimsleur Speaking Test has three parts: in the first part (vocabulary) the student is asked to give the names of various objects presented in pictures; in the second part (mimicry) he is to reproduce sounds in the context of a sentence or phrase; and in the third part (fluency) he has to respond to several basic questions. The test is administered individually and the responses recorded on tape for scoring later.

In the spring of 1971 the Pimsleur Speaking Test was administered to over 100 students, of whom 65 were grade 8 students who had attended CCIF during the previous month. The distribution suggested that the test was of a suitable level of difficulty. Test-retest data for two matched groups of 18 students at one school showed that mean scores rose from 58.2 to 71.6 for students attending CCIF and from 57.1 to 64.2 (largely due to practice effect) for those not at CCIF.

On examining the results more carefully, it appeared that the mimicry section was rather easy for most students and the fluency test rather difficult, while the vocabulary section was more suitable in difficulty and also appeared to show the greatest change as the result of the CCIF experience. It was decided, on the basis of these observations, to use a modified version of the test in evaluating CCIF groups in this study. The mimicry test was omitted and the vocabulary items of the higher level (C) combined with those of Form A, providing a total of 51 items in Part 1. In spite of the difficulty of the fluency section, it provided the most realistic speaking situation (response to questions) and was retained, again with a combination of the two levels in order to provide a longer test, with 15 items (to be called Part 2). In most cases students were tested in groups of about 20, using portable language testing equipment.

It had been observed that practice on the test seemed to result in increased scores, and a slight modification of the directions for Part I was made in an attempt to reduce this effect. The students were given the first nine items of the vocabulary section (those which appeared on the first page of the Level A booklet) as practice items. These items were repeated as part of the test proper and included in the total score. A study of the difference in scores on these nine items for 27 students in one of the schools showed that 8 students increased their score by two or more points, while 14 of 84 students in another intermediate school showed the same amount of change in the immediate re-test situation. For the nine items the mean score in these two schools increased from 5.5 to 6.1. It is probable that the score obtained after this short practice test is a better indication of a student's French vocabulary level than the score obtained without such practice, since the test situation was an unfamiliar one and perhaps inhibited responses in some pupils. Directions for the questions in Part II (fluency) were unchanged, since the task presented appeared to be a more familiar one than that of the vocabulary section.

The scoring of the Pimsleur Speaking Test was carried out by two French-speaking students from the University of Ottawa. Directions given in the manual were followed and, after a brief practice period, 23 tests were scored by these two students and a Research Centre staff member. (The product-moment correlation among the three scores for these cases varied from 0.93 to 0.96). After discussion of differences in interpretations discrepancies were reduced; inter-scorer reliability has consistently exceeded 0.95, although systematic differences in leniency of marking between these two scorers also had to be resolved.

At some of the schools the students tested with the modified version of the Pimsleur Speaking Test represented the entire grade 8 population, while in other cases only applicants for the intensive course were tested. Table 2 shows results obtained on the two parts by both the total grade 8 population and the applicant group in two schools.

Table 2

PIMSLEUR SPEAKING TEST - COMBINED LEVELS A AND C

| Group | Vocabulary | | Questions | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | N |
| School A | | | | | | | |
| All grade 8 students | 20.3 | 9.4 | 7.1 | 6.8 | 27.5 | 15.0 | 206 |
| CCIF applicants | 24.5 | 8.2 | 8.8 | 6.7 | 33.3 | 13.6 | 96 |
| School B | | | | | | | |
| All grade 8 students | 17.0 | 10.3 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 23.4 | 15.9 | 112 |
| CCIF applicants | 19.1 | 9.9 | 7.8 | 7.7 | 26.9 | 16.6 | 31 |

It will be observed that the second part of the test (Questions) is too difficult for these students, since a score of 6 to 9 indicates that only 2 or 3 of the 15 questions were answered correctly or that partially correct answers were given to a somewhat larger proportion of the items. Item analysis data showed that only three of the 15 items has mean ratings (on a three-point scale) of 1.0 or more. The speaking test prepared by the CCIF staff, to be described in the next section, was at a more suitable level of difficulty.

## CCIF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

During 1970-71 the CCIF staff prepared parallel forms of a speaking test (Test d'Expression) and a listening comprehension test (Test de Compréhension) for administration at the beginning and end of each session. The two forms of each test used for grades 8 and 9 were similar in content, but in the first year of their use no information was available concerning the difficulty level of corresponding items. The tests were modified slightly for use with grade 8 students in 1971-72.

Since the Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test was a longer test and similar in purpose to the CCIF Test de Compréhension in this study, analysis has been carried out with the CCIF Test d'Expression only. This test consisted of ten questions, repeated once where necessary, without gestures or supplementary explanation; students were told to reply in complete sentences. The format is similar to that of the Pimsleur Speaking Test, but the nature of the questions varies somewhat. The items in the two forms of the CCIF Test d'Expression are very similar in content.

A preliminary analysis suggested some variation among teachers in the rating of responses on a three point scale. Each teacher gave the test to about ten students and the average score assigned by the teachers was similar, but the pattern of item scores differed considerably for certain items or testers. For example, Teacher A's average ratings for the first three items were 1.4, 1.2, and 1.0, while Teacher B's were 1.6, 0.4, and 2.6.

After some discussion of these results, the teachers used the same items with students attending Session 4. It was found that in most cases the item ratings were similar, although sizable changes occurred in a few instances. Some of the differences may be due to the background of the pupils and some to the changes in rating procedures. On seven of the ten items the average rating was 1.0 or more.

At each session students were tested on the first day before being assigned to classes. At most sessions the re-testing was done by the same individual who had administered the pre-test. At one session it was also arranged to switch the two forms, in order to compare beginning-of-session ratings on the two forms. The mean item ratings were 1.3 and 1.1 respectively, the difference being in the same direction as the differences in Pimsleur test scores for the groups of students involved. Although there were individual item differences between the forms, these appear to balance each other, making the two forms very similar in difficulty.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

During 1970-71 students who attended CCIF were asked to complete a questionnaire soon after their return to regular classes. This questionnaire was expanded in 1971-72 and administered to all the grade 8 students in several schools, so that comparisons could be made among the applicants, those chosen to attend, and those not applying. In this section of the report data will be given concerning the total grade 8 population in four intermediate schools.

Several question were asked concerning opportunities to speak French or to have contact with French culture outside of school. Other questions asked about languages spoken by the students and members of their families and about facility in French. For the total group of 604 students in four schools selected responses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

SELECTED RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS
604 Grade 8 students in four Ottawa Intermediate Schools: 1971 - 72

| Question | Per cent giving response | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | School A (N= 198) | School B (N= 112) | School C (N= 124) | School D (N= 170) |
| During the last four weeks, about how much have you watched French programmes on television? | | | | |
| a. less than 1 hour | 76 | 77 | 60 | 71 |
| b. one or more hours | 18 | 19 | 36 | 24 |
| No reponse | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| During the past year, how many times have you gone to French movies or plays? | | | | |
| a. not at all | 76 | 86 | 89 | 78 |
| b. one or more times | 21 | 12 | 13 | 17 |
| No response | 3 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| How often do you receive French-language magazines or newspapers in your home? | | | | |
| a. at least occasionally | 37 | 28 | 39 | 28 |
| b. not at all | 63 | 70 | 61 | 72 |
| In the past four weeks, how many times has your family had French-speaking visitors? | | | | |
| a. once or more | 43 | 39 | 48 | 43 |
| b. not at all | 55 | 57 | 48 | 54 |
| no response | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Does your mother or father use French at work? | | | | |
| a. at least one | 39 | 32 | 43 | 36 |
| b. neither | 44 | 45 | 26 | 47 |
| c. don't know | 17 | 20 | 31 | 17 |
| no response | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

The last section of the questionnaire dealt with attitudes toward the learning of French. Several statements attempted to determine the nature of the students' motivation to learn French, and the responses to these items are summzarized in Table 4. In other items the students nearly all (91 to 97%) said that their parents felt it was a good thing to learn French, while less than half said that they has usually found French a difficult subject in school.

Table 4

REASONS FOR LEARNING FRENCH
Grade 8 students in four Ottawa Intermediate Schools: 1971 - 72

| Statement | Per cent showing agreement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | School A (N= 198) | School B (N= 112) | School C (N= 124) | School D (N= 170) |
| I expect to need French in whatever work I do after completing my education | 77 | 73 | 73 | 66 |
| I want to learn French so that I can talk fluently with French-speaking people | 81 | 64 | 82 | 67 |
| I want to learn French so that I can have a good choice of jobs when I finish school | 93 | 82 | 93 | 83 |
| I want to learn French so that I can use it when travelling in places where French is spoken | 83 | 74 | 89 | 78 |

Another item (see Table 5) asked directly which of five alternatives the student thought was the most important reason for him to learn French. Two of the alternatives (a and d) represent what has been called "instrumental" motivation, while two others (b and c) are intended to state "integrative" motives*. Table 5 shows the responses of all students in the four schools sending students to the first two regular grade 8 sessions of CCIF.

Table 5

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR LEARNING FRENCH
Choices of Grade 8 students in four Ottawa Intermediate Schools: 1971-72

| Reason | Percent choosing reason | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | School A (N=198) | School B (N=124) | School C (N=124) | School D (N=170) |
| a. It will help me in getting a good job | 55 | 58 | 49 | 58 |
| b. It will help me understand French-Canadian people better | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| c. It will allow me to meet and talk with people who are French speaking | 18 | 13 | 29 | 14 |
| d. It will make me a better-educated person | 19 | 16 | 15 | 10 |
| e. I feel that there is no good reason why I should learn French | 5 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| f. No response | 2 | 2 | 2 | 9 |

* G. Mori, F. Morrison and G. Halpern. Bilingual Education in the Elementary Schools: A Selected Annotated Bibliography. Ottawa Board of Education, Research Memorandum 71-II, September 1971.

PART II

## EFFECT OF THE CCIF EXPERIENCE

### INTRODUCTION

The experimental design planned for the evaluation of the Grade 8 CCIF experience did not provide for the making of comparisons until the end of the 1971-72 school year. At that time measures of listening comprehension and fluency are to be given, along with a brief attitude questionnaire. The statistical treatment will allow for differences among groups in ability and in initial French achievement, so that meaningful comparisons may be made.

However, in this interim report, a limited amount of data is available which may give an indication of what will be found in a more detailed analysis. Responses to the post-CCIF questionnaire for students attending three regular grade 8 sessions have been tabulated, and selected students attending CCIF from one school have been interviewed. Comparative test results are available in only two instances: pre- and post-test scores on the CCIF Test d'Expression for two groups, and pre- and post-test scores on the Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test for one group. These findings will be presented in Part II of this report, but it should be emphasized that the comparisons made can lead only to very tentative conclusions, since in many cases groups are not equivalent and a variety of factors other than the CCIF experience itself may be contributing to the differences noted.

The interview data will be presented first, followed by a summary of the responses to the questionnaire items which referred to CCIF. A third section will describe the comparative test results which are now available.

## INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

More than two months after the students from Pinecrest had attended CCIF, arrangements were made to interview eleven boys and eleven girls, representing a range of both general ability and pre-CCIF French achievement, as measured by the Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test and the CCIF Test d'Expression.

The most noticeable characteristic of the interviews was the great unanimity of feeling about the French immersion experience: that it was enjoyable and that the students felt they had learned something. Typical comments were:

- My French did get better.
- I learned a lot of new verbs and nouns, and how to put sentences together.
- I don't know if I learned that much more French, but I don't find it as hard to express myself in French as I used to.
- In that two weeks I learned about as much as in one year at school.

However, two girls who had shown marked improvement on the CCIF test felt that they had learned "not very much". One of these girls later said that she knew more answers to questions in class now, while the other felt that the immersion class had not lasted long enough; she was just getting used to it when it was over.

The students saw the CCIF experience as lively; they said it was fun and mentioned the teachers' enthusiasm. Several suggested that it had helped them change in their class participation in French at school and in their confidence in trying to learn to speak French. A number made comments such as:

- I can understand more what the teacher is saying and can answer questions better.
- I can understand more; I can say it easier.

The only changes suggested in the CCIF programme were minor. For example, two students said that everyone should have a chance to swim and others wanted more trips. Three said they did not like the language labs and one disliked the library period; however, another particularly liked these parts of the course.

The students were more critical, as might be expected, of the regular school French course. By comparison with CCIF, it was seen as less creative: "He just talks and we repeat". Six of the 22 interviewed students suggested spontaneously that they should have longer periods. One child, who had come from Toronto last year, suggested that a "catching-up programme for children from other cities" would be a good thing. Several thought that games and other activities would stimulate interest if used in the school programme.

In summary, the immersion course was viewed very positively by the students interviewed. The students appear motivated to continue in school French and to continue taking advantage of any school-related means of improving their facility in the language. There is some evidence which supports other data in this report that, for students who see themselves as low average or poor in French, the course is particularly helpful in giving them confidence and a change of attitude toward class participation, so that they feel that they are keeping up with their class or are even a bit above the average after attending CCIF.

The questionnaire results also indicated in general that students saw that CCIF experience very positively. Very few felt that it would have a harmful effect on their marks in other school subjects and a large majority believed that it would help their confidence in speaking French, as well as their school achievement in this subject. They also thought that they would, as a result of attendance at the two-week course, spend more time in out-of-school efforts to improve their French. Since there were 96 students at each session, together with about 5 students from the same schools who attended the remedial sessions, the proportion of students responding is well over 90 percent. The questionnaire responses were obtained from over 90 per cent of those attending CCIF during the first week the students were back in their regular school classes. The interview material described above suggests

 that their positive attitudes were maintained for a period of about nearly

## COMPARISONS BETWEEN CCIF STUDENTS AND OTHERS

It has already been pointed out that the experimental design planned for the evaluation of CCIF provides for careful control of numerous factors such as general academic ability, initial French achievement, and time of year, as well as balanced assignment of CCIF teachers to classes. These controls will allow valid comparisons to be made among groups and conclusions to be reached concerning the effect of the CCIF experience on various groups. Although in some schools there were few applicants in excess of the quota, it is hoped that, by combining groups attending various sessions, it will be possible to find comparison groups similar to those attending CCIF in the two major factors, general scholastic aptitude and initial French achievement.

At mid-year most of the post-test information was not yet available, since the re-testing was planned for May and June. However, it is possible to present a small amount of comparative information which may suggest the nature of the results which will be obtained from later and more complete analysis. One comparison which can be made is between pre-test and post-test scores on the CCIF Test d'Expression, at the beginning and end of the two-week session for two groups of students. In Part I of this report it was pointed out that the two sets of students differed somewhat in French listening comprehension, as measured by the Pimsleur test, and also that the two forms of the CCIF test may differ in difficulty. In addition, results on the pre-test and post-test for Session 4 were obtained by different testers, while the same testers gave both tests in Session 8. All of these factors make it necessary to exercise caution in comparing pre-test and post-test scores.

In spite of the limitations just mentioned there is evidence of change during the two week course. The change is particularly notable for certain items, such as number 2:

Form A - Est-ce que tu viens au CCFI à pied?

Form B - Est-ce que tu viens à l'école en autobus?

When the Form A question above was used at the beginning of Session 4, the average rating was 0.4; at the same session the average post-session rating for the corresponding Form B item was 2.2. At session 8 the Form B item was given first, with an average rating of 0.8. At this session the post-test rating for the Form B item was 1.5. Although the items seem slightly different in difficulty and the groups appeared to be somewhat different in initial ability, there seems little doubt that improvement occurred.

The 96 students attending each CCIF session were divided first into two groups of 48, based on Pimsleur Listening Comprehension test scores. Those with score of 20 or more were classified as $F^+$ and assigned to one of classes 1-4; those with scores of 14 or less were classified as F- and assigned to classes 5-9. Students with intermediate scores were place in $F^+$ or F- in a way which balanced the number of students with high and low academic ability in the two groups of 48. The final classification was based on the CCIF pre-tests of both speaking and listening comprehension.

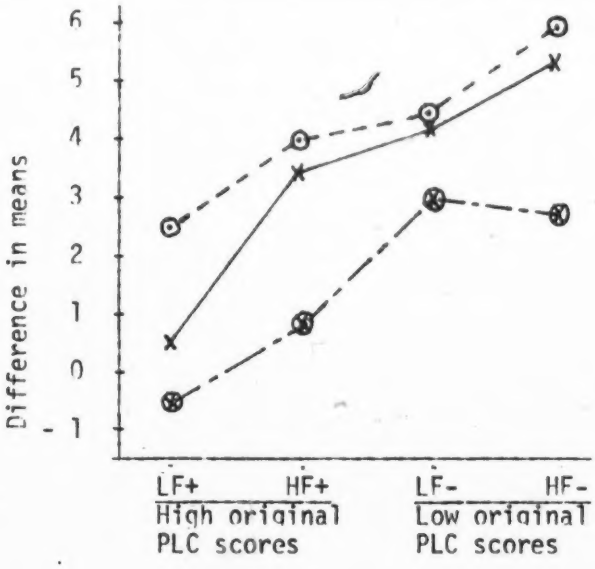
At Session 8 the same person administered the pre-test and the post-test to a given student, while at Session 4 the class teacher in each case administered the post-test. The pre-test at Session 4 was the same as the post-test for Session 8, and vice versa, as previously indicated. At these two sessions the mean score for CCIF class groups on the post-test ranged from 2.7 to 9.3 points higher than on the pre-test. The typical increase in score was close to 6 points, representing the equivalent of two additional questions answered correctly.

A second set of comparisons can be made between scores on the Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test which was given in January 1972 to all students in the two schools (Alta Vista and Gowling) from which students were chosen to attend Session 2 of CCIF in October 1971. The same test had been given in September 1971 before any of these students had been selected for Session 2. The interval between the two test sessions was about five months and the same students were tested each time. It is likely that some students did better the second time because the test situation was more familiar and perhaps because they remembered specific items.

The results of the re-testing in January 1972 suggest that there may be some differential effect of the CCIF experience among groups of differing abilities, and also that students with greater motivation learn more in the regular classroom than those of equivalent ability but with less motivation (as indicated by a desire to attend CCIF). It should be emphasized that the groups involved are often very small, and that more appropriate statistical analyses can be made when more data are available. However, the results suggest: (a) that CCIF students increased their PLC scores more than comparable groups not at CCIF; (b) that students with low French listening comprehension scores (HF- and LF-) showed greater increase than other groups; (c) that non-applicants showed less improvement than applicants who were not chosen for the CCIF experience; (d) that students of low academic ability but relatively high original listening comprehension scores may have benefited relatively more from CCIF than other groups. Figure 1 illustrates these generalizations graphically but it should be remembered that the number of cases in the comparison groups is very small and that different tendencies might be observed when a similar study is made of larger and more representative groups. It should also be noted that none of these generalizations has been tested for significance. It is hoped that a more adequate analysis of the data may be possible in order to identify more precisely the nature of the differences among the various groups.

Figure 1

Changes in scores on Pimsleur Listening Comprehension Test for various groups of students tested in September and January




⊙ Students attending CCIF

x Applicants not at CCIF

⊗ Non-applicants

## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report has provided mainly the descriptive data available at mid-year 1971-72 concerning some aspects of the French achievement of Ottawa Grade 8 students and concerning the effect of a two-week intensive course in French for about 300 of these students. During the years they have been in Ottawa schools, most of the present Grade 8 students have had a rather limited French programme, entirely oral and lasting about 15 minutes daily during grades 3 to 7. In the next few years students will be entering grade 8 after having started French instruction in Kindergarten, with longer class periods and an earlier introduction to reading and writing French. The data reported herewith can, therefore, help in continuing evaluation of the effectiveness of changing programmes in second-language learning in Ottawa schools.

### French achievement of the general Grade 8 population

Results of listening comprehension tests showed that Ottawa grade 8 students obtained lower scores than the U.S. high school students tested during the preparation of the norms and also lower scores than the English-speaking grade 7 students in one school in Quebec province. These results are to be expected, in view of the relatively greater maturity and probably greater academic aptitude of the first group and in view of the much greater emphasis on French in the elementary school curriculum in the second case. Similar data collected in later years may show the effect of curricular changes now being planned.

The tests of speaking ability, for both grade 8 students generally and for several groups attending CCIF, show a general lack of ability to express simple ideas in French. Even though the emphasis in the past seems to have been on vocabulary development, it appears that the short class periods may have not permitted adequate retention of the vocabulary developed in earlier grades. More careful analysis of data from several schools, together with information about the methods and content of instruction there, should give some clues as

to effective procedures which will help pupils expand their vocabulary and their general fluency. These findings again should be of interest to those concerned with on-going evaluation of curriculum and curricular changes.

Examination of the questionnaire data shows that grade 8 students in Ottawa Board of Education schools are predominantly English-speaking, have relatively little contact with French-speaking people, are very anxious to learn French for vocational reasons, and have generally positive attitudes toward the learning of French. Differences between CCIF applicants and those not applying will be examined when the data are analyzed in more detail.

## Changes in CCIF students

Comparisons between students attending CCIF and other groups were made in a few instances and were limited to relatively simple observations. Although no test of significance could be made, the data seemed to show evidence of improvement in speaking and listening skills. Probably more important is the general enthusiasm evident in both questionnaire and interview data, indicating that for many pupils the CCIF experience did in fact increase their motivation for learning French.

Though the number of students interviewed was small, nearly all of them mentioned increase in self-confidence, greater willingness to participate in class, and improved ability to understand French as consequences of attending CCIF. Several boys who had felt that they had not been doing well in school French seemed to have found the experience particularly helpful. It was the impression of the interviewer that in many cases the students had attended the intensive course largely because their parents had wanted them to, but that during the two weeks their self-motivation had increased.

The positive effect of the CCIF experience, as reported in interview data from one school, is supported by the questionnaire responses from nearly all of

the students who attended the first two sessions. Over 90 percent of the students felt that their ability to speak French had improved; nearly all of these said that their confidence had also improved.

There is some indication that the impact of the CCIF experience may be different in different schools. For example, in one school over half of those going to CCIF felt that attendance at the course would improve their enjoyment of and participation in school French classes and their efforts to speak French outside of school. In three other schools, the proportions were somewhat smaller, but from 15 to 40 percent made similar statements about the usefulness of the experience.

## Conclusion

The data collected during a few months of systematic evaluation of the two-week intensive French course for grade 8 students indicate that the experience has had a beneficial effect, especially in a motivational sense. It is impossible at this early date to make valid statistical comparisons of the relative effect of CCIF and the regular school experience on growth in French achievement. However, the data now on hand do suggest that the well-motivated students who applied to CCIF and were chosen did make greater progress than the applicants who were not chosen or the non-applicants. In addition, it appears that there may be certain groups of students for which the experience is particularly valuable, such as those whose self-confidence was low and who had previously been timid about participation in class.